

Local paths around

Blairgowrie

Five varied paths with clear maps and local information



Blairgowrie Further Information

Situated on the south facing slopes of the last foothills of the Grampians, the separate towns of Blairgowrie and Rattray were joined in 1928 by an Act of Parliament.

They are separated by the River Erich, which has its sources in two of the loveliest glens in Scotland, both being natural passes to the north from Strathmore – Strathardle and Glenshee, the Glen of the Fairies.

By the end of the 18th century the Blairgowrie area was a huge centre for the growing of flax. Initially the linen weaving industry was home based but the first industrial mill was erected in 1798. Others followed in the 19th century. In 1855 the railway arrived as a branch line from Coupar Angus.

The Cateran Trail starts and ends in Blairgowrie. It is Scotland's only long distance circular walk following the beautiful glens of Strathardle, Glenshee and Glen Isla. The trail can be walked in stages, or completed in a leisurely 4/5 days.



Making the most of your visit

Even in summer the weather can change quickly, so always take appropriate clothing. The paths can be muddy in places so sensible shoes or walking boots are recommended. Take a snack or drink along – it's always a good excuse to stop and enjoy the view. The Blairgowrie Path Network has been set up with the support of local landowners and farmers. Please remember that they make their living from the land so please adhere to the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.

Know the Code before you go...

Enjoy Scotland's outdoors – responsibly! Everyone has the right to be on most land and water providing they act responsibly. Your access rights and responsibilities are explained fully in the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.

Whether you're in the outdoors or managing the outdoors, the key things are to:

- take responsibility for your own actions
- respect the interests of other people
- care for the environment

Find out more by visiting: www.outdooraccess-scotland.com
If you would like a copy of the full code phone Scottish Natural Heritage on 01738 444177.

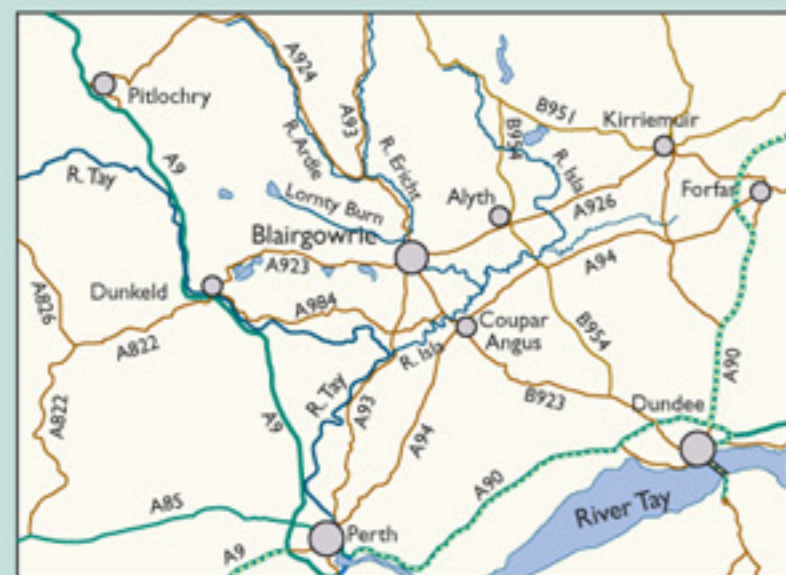
Blairgowrie Path Network

The Path Network consists of five paths through some stunning countryside. Each route offers something different, from woodlands and rolling hills to rivers and open countryside. The paths also chart the area's colourful history; Neolithic remains, drove roads, Highland "reivers", the challenges of religious faith and the development of an industrial mill town.

For shorter routes please pick up the 'Stride for Life' leaflet from the Tourist Office in Blairgowrie.



How to get there



For further information contact Perth and Kinross Council Countryside Ranger Service on 01738 475258
To report faults and defects Contact 'Clarence' on 01887 829685



Blairgowrie Paths:

- Start of path
- Bluebell Wood Path
- Ardblair Trail
- The 'Knockie' Path
- River Erich Path
- Drimmie Wood Path
- Other Paths

SCALE: 1:25,000
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The 'Knockie' Path

The route begins at the start of the Cateran Trail and offers spectacular scenery and a chance to see some of Blairgowrie's important milling heritage

Distance 3 miles / 5 km **Approximate time** 1.5 hours
Start and finish - Riverside Car Park
Terrain - Level path by the river with a steep climb to the summit of the Knockie. The old mill road next to the river is suitable for wheel chairs. The whole route is suitable for horse riding and mountain biking.

One of the two river-viewing platforms along the way looks down to the famous 'Cargill's Leap'. Born in 1610 in nearby Hatton, Donald Cargill became a minister of the Barony Kirk in Glasgow. He refused to acknowledge the laws passed by Charles II to establish bishops in Scotland and was outlawed with a price put on his head.

In one infamous adventure he escaped a party of Dragoons by jumping the narrow gorge. He was finally executed in 1681. You can reach a bridge crossing between Oakbank Mill and Keathbank Mill by an old mill road. Most of the mills here turned flax into linen, employing nearly 2000 people at their peak.

The Cateran Trail follows a farm track, leading to views of the Lorn Valley and the hills beyond. The Knockie is actually the last (or first!) foothill of the Grampians. Stop for a rest to view the Sidlaws, before heading back downhill. You can pick up the Ardblair Trail or continue down to Blairgowrie via Newton Street.



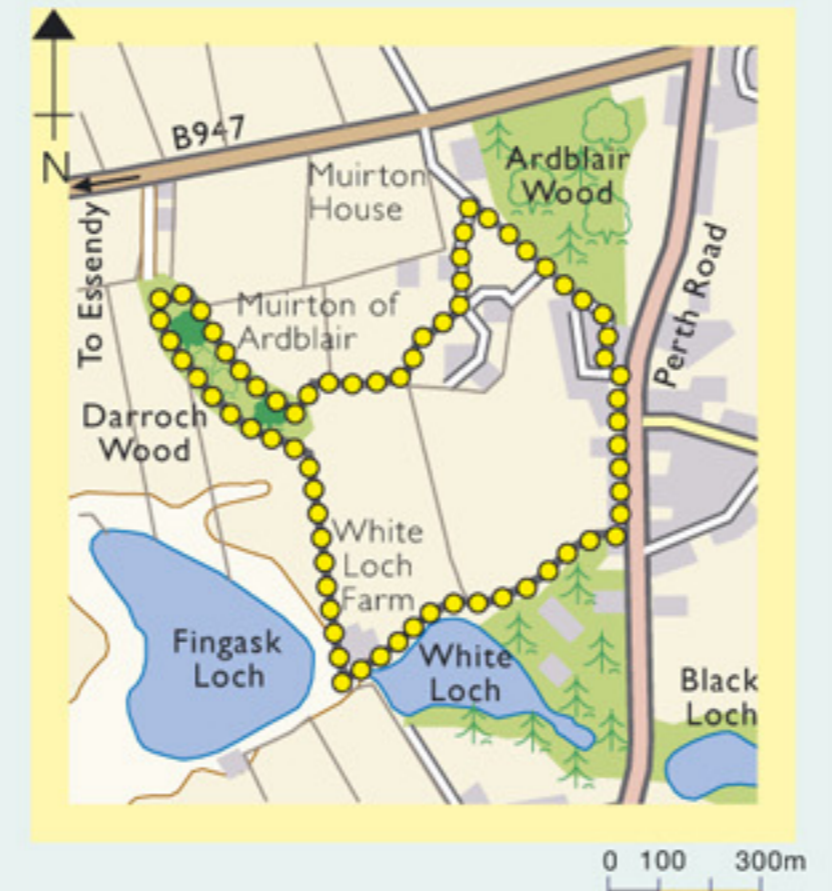
The Ardblair Trail

Follow the footsteps of Highland Warriors and Clan Chiefs on a short walk around the outskirts of Blairgowrie

Distance 3 miles / 5 km **Approximate time** 1.5 hours
Start and finish - Wellmeadow, Blairgowrie
Terrain - Gentle gradients and level paths make this route suitable for most walkers. Part of the Gallowbank path is suitable for wheel chairs. The route from Myreside Farm to Ardblair Wood is suitable for horseriders and mountain bikers.

The Ardblair Trail is a short walk, past castles, through mixed countryside and ancient woodland. The route leaves the town along the Gallowbank, aptly named as this is where executions used to take place. Nearby is Newton Castle, an ancient fortified farmhouse, once the stronghold of the Drummond Clan but now the home of Sir William Macpherson, Chief of the Clan Macpherson. At Myreside Farm you will find an interesting collection of 19th century farm buildings.

The path leads to a track known as the 'Weasel Roadie'. Not far from this point is Ardblair Castle, belonging to the Blair Oliphant family, which dates back to 1115. Legend has it that in the 16th century two Drummond men, father and son from Newton Castle, were ambushed and murdered by the Blairs. This did not bode well for Lady Jean Drummond who was in love with a Blair. Heartbroken, Lady Jean wandered out into the marshes... and never returned. Her ghost, dressed in green silk, now divides her time between the two castles.



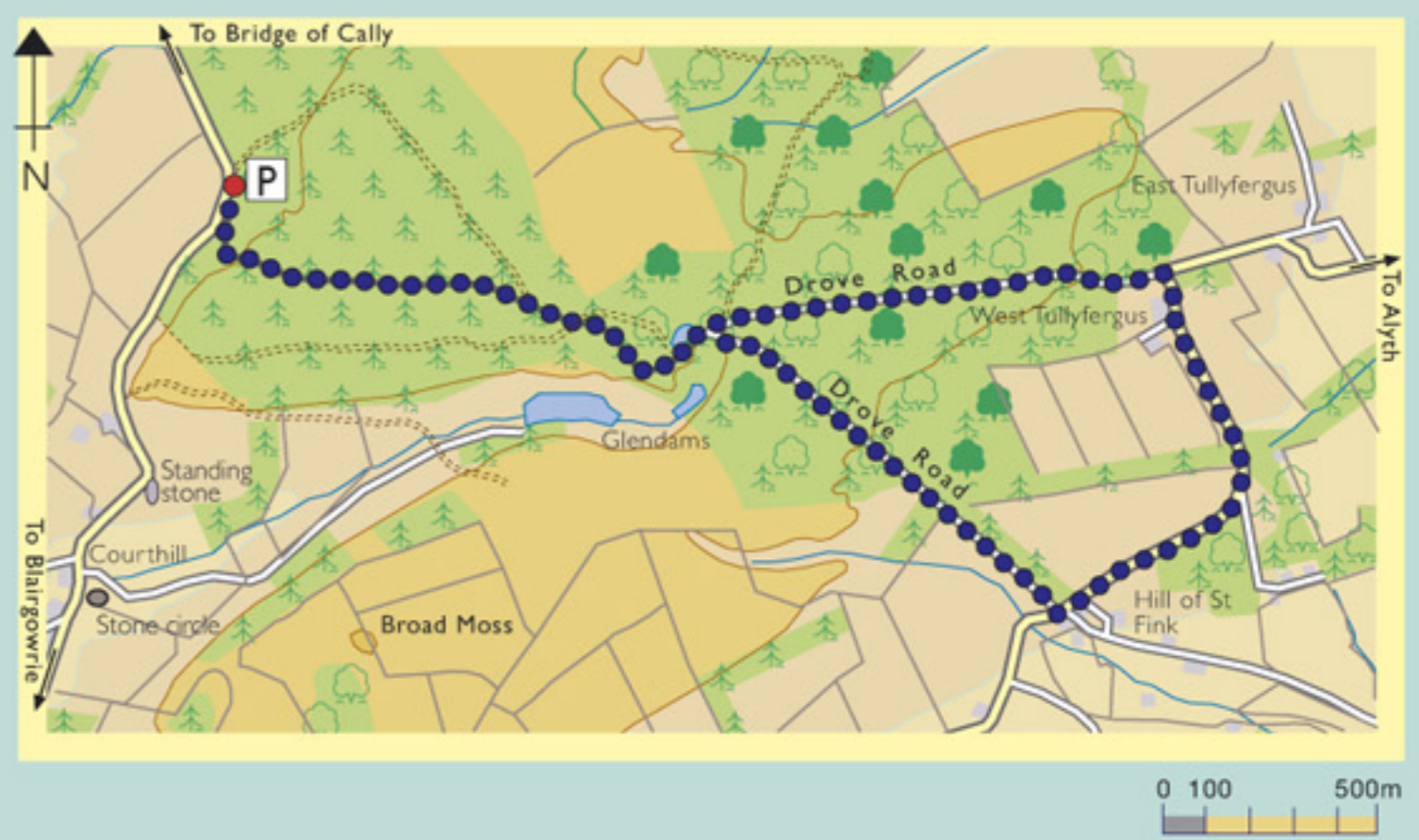
Bluebell Wood

Enjoy a walk through a spectacular Bluebell Wood and visit the scenic White Loch

Distance 2 miles / 3 km **Approximate time** 1 hour (but allow for an additional 30 - 40 minutes if walking from the centre of Blairgowrie).
Start and finish - Muirton of Ardblair
Terrain - The route mainly follows a mixture of good level paths but there are some uneven sections through Bluebell Wood with gentle gradients. Due to mixed ground conditions the path is only suitable for walkers.

Follow the Perth road and take the Ardblair Trail through the Ardblair Woods. Muirton of Ardblair was once a weaver's village said to be the last place in Scotland where strip farming took place. Sadly the majority of the cottages have long gone but the area still retains its charm. The path takes you into the 'Darroch Wood' (Gaelic for oak wood). Spectacular from the beginning of April the woodland floor is a carpet of bluebells. Bluebells are susceptible to trampling so please stick to the path. Follow the path to 'White Loch', a popular place for both anglers and bird watchers - you may see osprey fishing the loch for trout. Enter 'Druidsmere Wood', a remnant of a much larger woodland. Some of the trees appear to have been pollarded, a sustainable process of harvesting tree limbs to be used for firewood, making into charcoal or for building materials.

The path comes out opposite the Dalmore Hotel on the main Perth Road, from here turn left back to the start where you have the option of following the Ardblair Trail back to the town centre.



Drimmie Wood

Enjoy great views of the local hills and beyond as you follow an old drove road through Drimmie Wood

Distance 4 miles / 7 Km **Approximate time** 2.5 hours
Start and finish - Car park at Drimmie Wood
Terrain - Most of the route follows good tracks with gentle gradients. Suitable for walkers, mountain biking and horse riding. Drimmie Wood and the Tullyfergus loop are suitable for horses but not the linking section due to soft ground conditions. It is possible to walk to Drimmie Wood from Blairgowrie following the Drimmie Road for 2 miles. This involves some steep climbs and blind bends so please take care. The standing stone near the road is known as the Kynballoch Stone. The stone has three 'cup marks', small circular depressions believed to be created by our Neolithic ancestors.

Drimmie Wood is managed by Forestry Commission Scotland and planted with fast growing Sitka spruce for timber production. Keep an eye out for the wood art sculptures, made by a local community group. There are other tracks through the wood but the waymarked route goes directly towards the Tullyfergus Estate. Note the difference in types of trees as you leave Drimmie Wood and head across Tullyfergus. The estate has planted a large quantity of native hardwood trees such as ash and oak and also left clearances which are good for wildlife. The path is an ancient drove road used hundreds of years ago to move cattle from the highlands to towns such as Coupar Angus, Blairgowrie and beyond. The view to the north extends as far as the Angus hills and to the east and south lie the Sidlaws. The path leads to the Alyth Road, and the town of Alyth via the Den o' Alyth. The waymarked path loops back up another drove road retracing your steps back through Drimmie Wood.

Other Paths in the Blairgowrie area

The Cateran Trail
Terrain - The Trail follows quiet roads, old drover's tracks and open countryside. The route goes through farmland with sheep and cattle and much of it is on unsurfaced paths through open countryside. Access for mountain bikes and horses is therefore limited. Blackcraig Forest at Bridge of Cally offers very good access for horses and mountain bikes all year round.

The Trail is 64 miles/103 km and can be completed over 4 or 5 days and will take you through some stunning countryside passing through Strathardle, Glenshee and Glenisla.

North Wood, Meikleour
Terrain - Even ground with good tracks suitable for walkers, mountain biking and horse riding.

North Wood at Meikleour holds a special secret. A visit to the wood will reveal one of Scotland's most curious Scheduled Ancient Monuments, the 'Cleaven Dyke'. The Cleaven Dyke is a 2 metres high mound of earth that extends for about 2km. It dates back to the Neolithic period and may have been used for ceremonial purposes.

Also near the village is another famous attraction, the Meikleour Beech Hedge. The hedge is recorded in the Guinness Book of Records as being the highest hedge in the world.

Stormont Loch
Terrain - Even ground with good tracks suitable for walkers, mountain biking and horse riding.

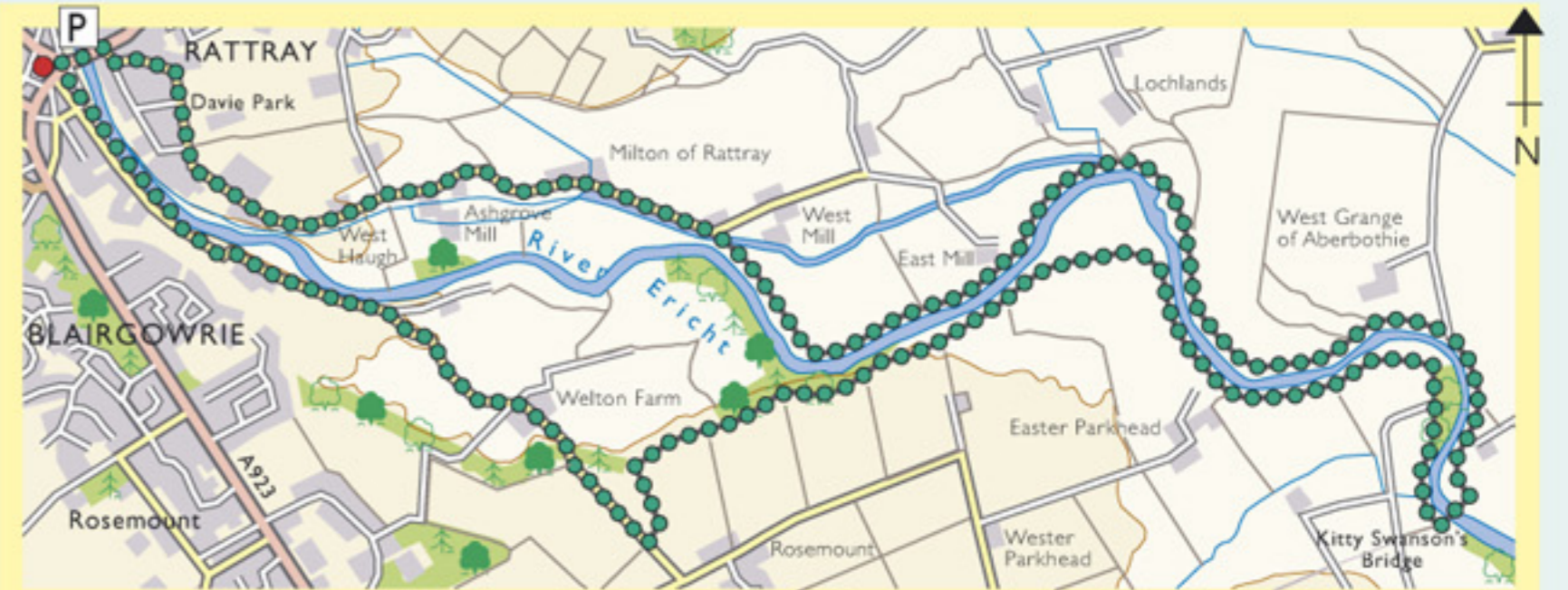
Stormont Loch is well worth a visit, there are good tracks around the loch and through the adjacent woodland. The Loch is a very important area for over wintering wildfowl. Tufted ducks and great crested grebes nest there.

Other Popular Paths
 The majority of the paths shown in grey are through open farmland so please adhere to the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.

The Blairgowrie Path Network has been developed by the Perth and Kinross Countryside Trust with support from the European Regional Development Fund, Perth and Kinross Council, East Perthshire Access Network, Blairgowrie High School, and local landowners.

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River Erich Path

Enjoy a long walk along river banks and through mixed countryside

Distance 8 miles / 13km **Approximate time** 4 - 4.5 hours
Start and finish - The Wellmeadow, Blairgowrie
Terrain - The start and finish of the route is on minor roads so please take care. The off-road sections follow field edge and flood banks with gentle gradients; stout footwear is recommended. Due to soft ground conditions the route is only suitable for walkers.

The way-marked trail takes you through a mixed landscape with huge fields of barley, wheat and strawberries all owned by the Co-op. Farmcare, the managers, farming over 30,000 ha, are the biggest in Britain.

River crossing: Kitty Swanson operated a ferry crossing here for many years in the late 1800's and lived in a cottage nearby. From Kitty Swanson's crossing on the side of the river, the route is more open. To the south east you can get excellent views of the Sidlaws. Kinpurney Tower, above Newtyle, was built as an observatory in 1774. The route back takes you past several old mills. Ashgrove Road leads back towards Rattray. Then onto Davie Park, gifted to the people of Blairgowrie and Rattray by local business man William Davie and his sister Mrs Nicoll in 1892.

Welton Road: Blairgowrie Railway Station stood near here. Many local people remember the 'raspberry specials' from the 1950's, bearing their sweet cargoes all the way to London's Covent Garden.